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ABSTRACT

This study examined the faculty reward system in public universities to ascertain how the current system affects faculty use of time especially by faculty at Ohio's 13 public universities. The study reviewed how university norms and incentives regarding promotion and tenure influence a faculty member's decision to focus on research over teaching and service. Findings suggest that promotion and tenure decisions are most heavily based on research productivity with three reasons noted for this unbalanced approach: (1) national competition for university prestige; (2) lack of clear-cut standards for judging teaching and service; and (3) existence of a national, educational culture that stresses research publication. The imbalance favoring research leads to three primary consequences that should concern education: first, a negative impact on undergraduate education resulting directly from from the lack of emphasis on teaching; second, a lack of attention given to service so faculty are less likely to share their knowledge outside of academic circles; and third, a lack of collaboration among faculty, because faculty are seldom rewarded for working within or across disciplines. Appendixes include the faculty reward study interview questions and a comment on the report by the Chancellor of the Ohio Board of Regents. (Contains 22 references.) (NAV)

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THE FACULTY REWARD SYSTEM IN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES

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COLUMBUS, OHIO

July 1993

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The Legislative Office of Education Oversight (LOEO) serves as staff to the Legislative Committee on Education Oversight. Created by the Ohio General Assembly in 1989, the Office conducts studies of education-related activities funded wholly or in part by the state of Ohio.

This is a report of the LOEO to the Legislative Committee on Education Oversight. *This report of the LOEO staff does not necessarily reflect the views of the Committee or any of its members.*

July 1993

SUMMARY

THE FACULTY REWARD SYSTEM IN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES

The Legislative Office of Education Oversight (LOEO) studied the faculty reward system in public universities to describe the ways this system affects how faculty spend their time. This report explains the university norms and incentives which can influence a faculty member's decision to focus on research over teaching and service.

Background

Full-time university faculty are usually hired into "tenure-track" positions, meaning they will be eligible for tenure after several years of experience and successful reviews. Tenure is a commitment by the university to give the faculty member an ongoing appointment. Receiving tenure and being promoted through three faculty ranks are the significant rewards in universities.

The process of being promoted or receiving tenure involves having a series of internal university committees review a candidate's work according to three criteria--research, teaching, and service. The expectation for service includes working on university committees and applying expertise to issues outside of the university. The committees reviewing a candidate's work are composed almost exclusively of tenured faculty who have already been through the same process.

Findings

LOEO found that although there are three stated criteria--research, teaching, and service--for which faculty are to be rewarded, the most weight is usually given to research in tenure and promotion decisions. There are three primary reasons for the imbalance of research over teaching and service. First, there is a national competition among universities for prestige, and it is usually research which brings this prestige. Second, there are no clearcut standards for judging teaching and service. During tenure and promotion reviews, it is easier to count the research articles published in academic journals than it is to judge the quality of teaching or service. Third, faculty members are part of a national culture which encourages research publications. Professors must adhere to norms for publishing in order to make careers in universities.

The imbalance favoring research leads to three primary consequences. First, undergraduate education may be negatively impacted by the lack of emphasis on teaching. Second, there is a lack of attention given to service, so faculty are less likely to share their knowledge outside of academic circles. Finally, there is a lack of collaboration among faculty because they are seldom rewarded for working with others within or across disciplines. As a result, complex problems may not be effectively addressed by university faculty.

July 1993

FACULTY REWARD SYSTEMS IN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES

CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

The Legislative Office of Education Oversight (LOEO) serves as staff to the Legislative Committee on Education Oversight. Created by the Ohio General Assembly in 1989, the Office studies education-related activities funded wholly or in part by the state of Ohio.

This is a report of the LOEO to the Legislative Committee on Education Oversight. *Conclusions in this report are those of the LOEO and do not necessarily reflect the view of the Committee or any of its members.*

Legislators have expressed an interest in faculty workload. This report describes the reward system which helps determine how faculty members spend their time. LOEO explains the university norms and incentives which can influence a faculty member's decision to focus on research over teaching and service.

As described by Ernest Boyer of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching:

> At the very heart of the current debate - the single concern around which all others pivot - is the issue of faculty time. What's really being called into question is the reward system and the key issue is this: What activities of the professoriate are most highly prized? After all, it's futile to talk about improving the quality of teaching if, in the end, faculty are not given recognition for the time they spend with students.

BACKGROUND

Ohio's public institutions of higher education include 13 universities with 25 branch campuses, 13 technical colleges, 10 community colleges, and two free-standing medical schools. This report focuses on how faculty are rewarded at Ohio's 13 public universities, also referred to in this document as "four-year institutions." Many of the policies and issues related to the reward system at four-year institutions also affect their branch campuses.

REPORT ORGANIZATION

This report describes the issues surrounding the faculty reward system. Chapter II explains how universities are organized and how faculty are rewarded within them. Chapter III discusses the imbalance in research over teaching and service in faculty reward decisions, and Chapter IV suggests future considerations for addressing faculty reward issues. Appendix A provides a selected bibliography. The questions used to interview faculty and administrators are in Appendix B.

CHAPTER II
FACULTY POSITIONS AND REWARDS

The way faculty members are rewarded is a function of how universities are organized and their expectations of those in faculty positions. To understand why faculty members use their time as they do, it is important to understand the structure and norms of the university.

Universities are organized into separate colleges and each college into separate academic departments. Sometimes departments are further subdivided into program areas. The typical organization for four-year institutions is shown in Exhibit 1. This structure has a significant impact on the faculty reward system because faculty committees within each department are instrumental in deciding who receives tenure and promotion within the department.

FACULTY POSITIONS

Faculty members are hired into a particular program area or department. Their responsibilities include teaching courses, advising students, conducting research, developing curricula or course material, serving on faculty committees, and sharing their expertise with the community beyond the university. Their responsibilities vary depending on the department in which they work, because each department has its own expectations and criteria for rewarding faculty.

Typically, the positions of college deans and department chairpersons are occupied by individuals who were once full-time faculty. Chairpersons and deans usually retain their membership in the faculty regardless of whether they continue to teach.

Four-year institutions employ part-time and full-time faculty. Part-time faculty often include adjunct professors and instructors. Adjunct professors are typically employed outside the university and are occasionally invited to teach a course in an area related to their profession. Instructors may be full- or part-time. In addition, graduate students may serve as teaching assistants on a part-time basis.

Full-time faculty are hired either into "tenure-track" or "nontenure-track" positions. Tenure-track faculty are eligible for tenure status after several years of service and successful reviews. Instructors are typically in nontenure-track positions.

The granting of tenure signifies a commitment by the university to give the faculty member an ongoing appointment upon completion of stated criteria. This

The practice of granting tenure stems from universities' desire to protect academic freedom--the search for knowledge and its free presentation. When academic freedom was first accepted as university policy in 1925, its purpose was to protect the research and teaching of ideas which may have been unpopular at the time. Included in the concept of academic freedom is the responsibility to present material and viewpoints in a balanced way. The protection of academic freedom is considered fundamental to the advancement of knowledge through teaching and research, and to ensure the rights of teachers and students.

Across 12 of Ohio's 13 public universities, the proportion of tenured full-time faculty ranges from 65 to 78 percent. These percentages are consistent with national statistics. In Ohio's newest and smallest university, Shawnee State, 37 percent of full-time faculty are tenured.

Ranks of tenure-track professors

Faculty at four-year institutions are usually hired into tenure-track positions as assistant professors, and they advance to the ranks of associate professors and full professors, as shown in Exhibit 2.

EXHIBIT 2

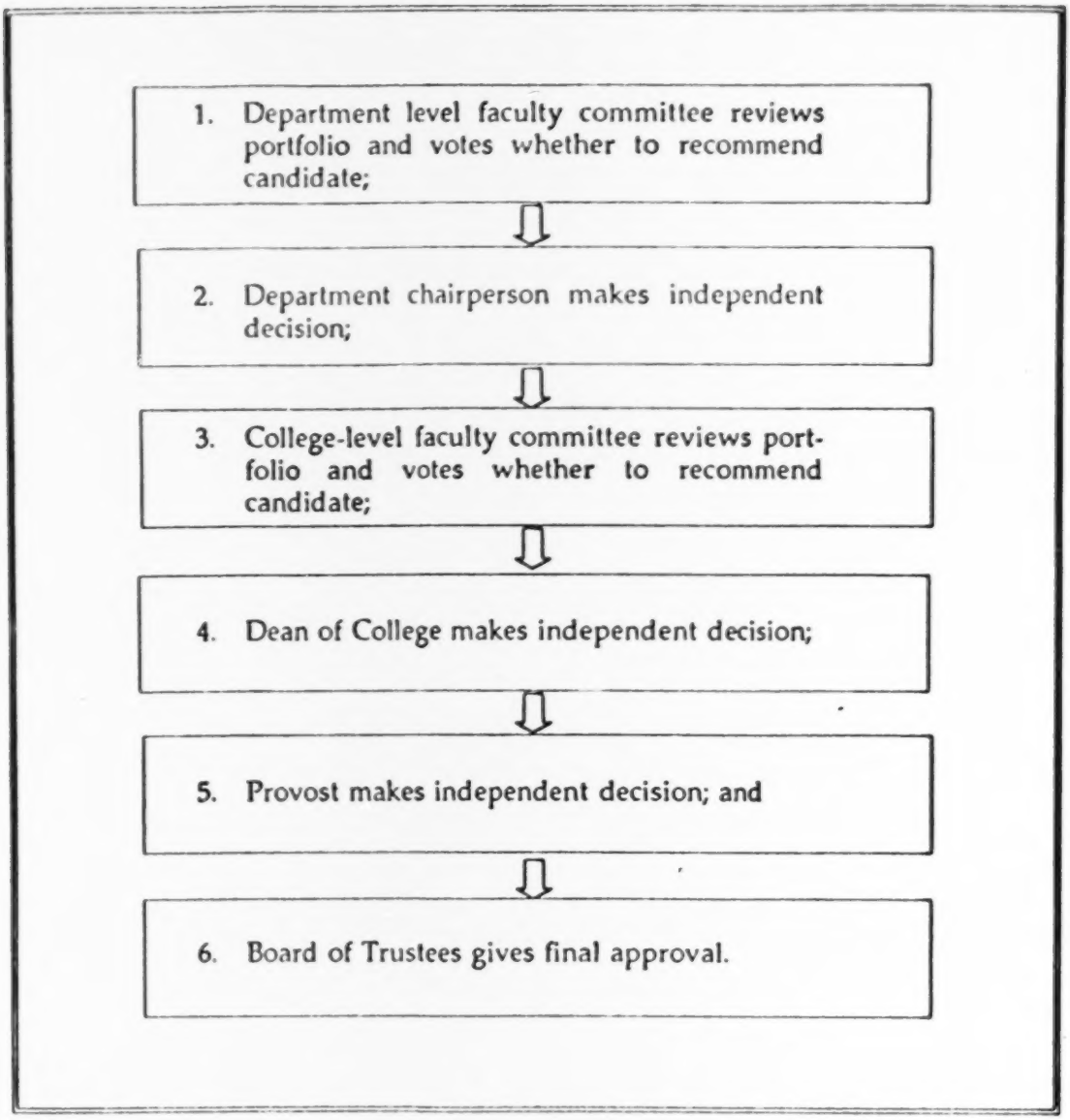
TYPES OF FACULTY POSITIONS

TENURE-TRACK RANKS	NON-TENURE-TRACK TITLES
Assistant Professor *(tenure decision made here)*	Instructors or Adjunct Faculty
Associate Professor	
Full Professor	

Tenure-track positions at four-year institutions usually begin as a series of one-year renewable appointments. Some universities review assistant professors annually during the five to seven years prior to the tenure decision. These reviews ensure assistant professors are completing the amount and types of work which eventually will earn them tenure.

EXHIBIT 3

TYPICAL STEPS IN THE FACULTY REVIEW PROCESS


1. Department level faculty committee reviews portfolio and votes whether to recommend candidate;
2. Department chairperson makes independent decision;
3. College-level faculty committee reviews portfolio and votes whether to recommend candidate;
4. Dean of College makes independent decision;
5. Provost makes independent decision; and
6. Board of Trustees gives final approval.

CHAPTER III
IMBALANCE OF RESEARCH OVER TEACHING AND SERVICE

From its review of the literature on this topic, LOEO concludes that, nationally, there is an imbalance in the faculty reward system which prizes research over other faculty activities. Although universities state that three criteria--research, teaching, and service--are considered in rewarding faculty, the most weight tends to be given to research. This is true even at the institutions which report they are teaching-oriented. Faculty tend to be promoted or granted tenure more readily as a result of their research than for any other activity.

Focus on research

The research conducted at universities is often important to national, state, and local interests. Research is needed to expand basic knowledge as well as to apply new findings to current problems. Policy makers and reporters often turn to experts at universities when they need immediate, impartial information on a topic new to the public's attention. They rely on the fact that professors at universities have become specialists on these topics through years of research. In addition, conducting research may help faculty stay current in their disciplines, which can improve teaching. However, it is the emphasis on research over other valuable faculty work which concerns policy makers, students, parents, and the general public.

For example, according to a 1990 survey of university faculty conducted by the National Endowment for the Humanities, 71 percent of faculty report their interests lean toward or lay primarily in teaching. However, faculty report the "road to success--or even survival--in the academic world is through publishing."

In his survey of professors of education at public universities, Roger Soder found that 93 percent of those at flagship institutions and 73 percent of those at major institutions described research as essential for tenure. Teaching, on the other hand, was perceived as essential by 17 percent and 40 percent, respectively. However, more than 78 percent of these professors would prefer teaching to be essential for tenure. The Higher Education Research Institute's 1991 study reported that 44 percent of faculty at public institutions felt that demands for research interfered with teaching.

A study conducted by Alene Bycer Russell for the State Higher Education Executive Officers concluded that the research university has become the model emulated by other four-year institutions. Yet this shift in mission may not be beneficial.

According to those interviewed, service contributions carry little to no weight in tenure decisions and are only marginally more important during promotion decisions. Service is described as being "tagged on" at the end of the tenure and promotion review process by one university administrator. Respondents said that service never compensates for less than adequate research or teaching when tenure decisions are made. As a result, untenured faculty members are advised to focus on developing their teaching and their research programs.

This finding supports a 1992 LOEO study of Ohio's Urban University Program. Although specifically funded by the state to bring university expertise to bear on urban problems, faculty members engaged in Urban University Program activities generally were not rewarded for such efforts, unless they were also able to publish this work in academic journals.

However, two university sources said there are sometimes exceptions in terms of promotions. A professor may be promoted based on good teaching, less than adequate research, but outstanding service. To be promoted to a full professor, one university administrator interviewed by LOEO expects quality performance in service in addition to strong research and teaching.

FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO IMBALANCE

The imbalance of research over teaching and service in the faculty reward system is due to a combination of three factors, and their effects on one another. These factors are embedded in the process of granting promotions and tenure to faculty at four-year institutions throughout the country. They include:

1. A national competition among universities for prestige, funds, faculty, and students;

2. The perceived difficulty of assessing faculty work other than research; and

3. The nationwide culture of universities.

National competition among universities

Universities compete nationally for prestige, and its accompanying funds, faculty, and students. The colleges and departments within universities compete for recognition

researchers, and who can help win research grants from federal and state governments and corporations.

Universities' competition for faculty members adds pressure to individual faculty to do research and publish articles in prestigious academic journals. In addition to enhancing the reputation of their institution, and increasing their own potential for promotions or tenure, research helps individual careers. Since highly regarded researchers are valued by universities, faculty members continue to research and publish in order to increase their ability to seek employment at increasingly more prestigious universities.

Competition for students. Public institutions of higher education receive state funding based upon enrollment--another incentive to attract and retain students. Therefore, universities also compete for students. Institutions with faculty members known for their research, or institutions known for their exceptional departments or colleges, attract more applicants, particularly at the graduate level. The ability to choose among applicants increases the quality of students enrolled in a university, and this adds to the overall prestige of the institution. The prestige of a university enables it to maintain high student enrollment.

Overall, the competition for prestige affects universities' goals for themselves, and their criteria for rewarding faculty. If research is the activity that brings in funds, faculty, and students in the national marketplace, then it will overshadow the local impact of teaching and service in the universities' mission and reward system.

Difficulty of assessing faculty work

Although all academic departments state they value a combination of research, teaching, and service, they find it difficult to assess these criteria equally. To summarize a number of writers on this topic, research activities which result in published articles are the most straightforward assessment tool when considering a tenure or promotion candidate's contributions. Two university personnel interviewed by LOEO described research as "the easiest to judge."

Judging publications. A faculty member's research contribution is usually assessed by looking at articles published in what are called "refereed" academic journals. These periodicals only publish articles after a rigorous "blind" review, during which academicians in the same field critique the submitted article without knowing who submitted the piece or with which university the author is associated.

in the eyes of colleagues in other disciplines. This creates a particularly ironic imbalance of research over teaching in the very discipline that focuses on education.

Faculty norms. Tenured faculty often are instrumental in granting rewards to individuals and influencing campus policies pertaining to the reward system. As noted in Exhibit 3, faculty serve on department- and college-level committees which award tenure and promotions. They determine how research, teaching, and service are weighed in these deliberations. Although faculty surveys report that they would prefer to give more consideration for teaching and service, faculty members continue to value research more when deciding who in their department will be promoted or tenured.

Faculty may be reluctant to change the university culture because doing research has become a criterion for entering the profession. In order to obtain a Ph.D., students must demonstrate that they can conduct research. While working on their doctorates, many students also serve as teaching assistants. However, they are encouraged by their faculty mentors to focus on their research, rather than their teaching responsibilities. Consequently, "professor as researcher" becomes the model passed on to the next generation of faculty.

Once hired, untenured assistant professors are socialized to publish and attend to graduate students, according to James Fairweather's study for the National Center on Postsecondary Teaching, Learning, and Assessment. They must adopt the norms of conducting and publishing their research in order to become tenured. However, there are few incentives for new faculty to focus on their teaching.

Furthermore, faculty are discouraged from collaborating because tenure and promotion review committees are unable to distinguish which faculty member did which portion of the work. Recognition for research and published articles is more attainable if one works independently.

There is also an incentive for faculty members to be somewhat secretive about their research projects since refereed academic journals will only publish original research. Faculty members do not want others to learn about their projects and perhaps complete similar work, publish similar results, and eliminate their chance of publishing.

An important aspect of the university culture is the fact that it is a national culture. Faculty members are socialized into a national, and even international, society of peers in their academic disciplines. The national marketplace for prestige, research funds, faculty members, and students reinforces the same set of values across individual

At the same time, there are few incentives for faculty to participate in activities related to improving teaching. Although universities grant Teacher of the Year awards, even faculty with heavy teaching loads are not required to formally review their teaching effectiveness.

A further consequence of the research emphasis is the lack of attention given to service, especially service to those outside of the university. With the service function "tagged on" in the tenure and promotion review process, and community service activities devalued, there is little incentive for faculty members to bring their academic expertise to bear on the problems faced by cities, schools, or policy makers.

Finally, the existing reward structure provides little encouragement for faculty to collaborate, either within or across disciplines. Even though some research topics, particularly complex public policy problems, require an inter-disciplinary perspective, it is difficult for faculty to be rewarded with tenure or promotion for such efforts. Consequently, these topics remain unaddressed by faculty members in universities, who may be in the best position to consider them.

CHAPTER IV
FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

Research is a valuable enterprise at universities. However, faculty reward policies which overemphasize research have an impact on Ohio students, parents, policy makers, and the general public.

Although many university faculty and administrators recognize the imbalance of research over teaching and service in the faculty reward system, they feel constrained by university norms when addressing this issue. Efforts to change the reward system must recognize that universities are a part of a national marketplace, with similar structures and norms at most four-year institutions. A change in how one institution or one state rewards its faculty may make that university less competitive in the existing system. In addition, universities generally resist external attempts to influence their internal policies.

In order to balance the criteria for rewarding faculty, universities may need pressure and incentives from both inside and outside the institution. A study by the State Higher Education Executive Officers concluded that state governing and coordinating boards, as well as state legislatures, are now more inclined to become involved in university policies related to faculty members.

Currently, the Pew Charitable Trust is supporting a study to determine how five states (Colorado, Maine, New Jersey, Vermont, and Washington) might revise both their state and university policies in order to create incentives for change within the universities. The project is paying particular attention to how undergraduate teaching is rewarded at institutions of higher education in those states.

For example, in 1991 the New Jersey legislature considered encouraging universities to reward undergraduate teaching. Proposed legislation suggested that "equal consideration shall be given to effective teaching, scholarly achievement, and contributions to the college and community" when tenure decisions are considered. Although this proposal never became law, it did bring considerable attention to the faculty reward issue.

An example of a national effort to address the faculty reward issue is evident in two consortia of colleges of education. Both the Holmes Group and the National Network for Educational Renewal are attempting to combine the faculty roles of research, teaching, and service as they work more closely with elementary and secondary

In conclusion, what may be needed is a national concerted effort by those inside and outside universities to de-emphasize the prestige that research brings, and focus on the fact that undergraduate students and local communities also need the attention of university faculty.

State legislatures, higher education governing and coordinating boards, as well as the national organizations to which faculty members in each discipline belong, could be a part of this effort. According to the studies reviewed for this report, many faculty members, university administrators, parents, and students would welcome a change in the current system.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

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APPENDIX B

March 10, 1993

FACULTY REWARD STUDY
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Structure

1. Please describe the general structure of your institution with attention to how it is organized into, for example, colleges, departments, and program areas.

2. What percentage of your faculty are tenured or in tenure-track positions?

   a. Of those in tenure-track positions, what percent are tenured?

3. Please describe the typical steps in a tenure or promotion review process.

Issues

4. Please briefly describe your institution's mission, and what faculty hired into tenure-track positions are told about the university's expectations of them.

   a. What are these faculty members told about the colleges' expectations of them?

   b. the department's expectations of them?

   c. Please provide LOEO with any documentation of what work faculty in tenure-track positions are told to focus upon and document for their tenure and promotion reviews.

5. a. What are the criteria considered during tenure and promotion reviews? Please describe them separately.

      1. Research
      2. Teaching
      3. Service

   b. What is the relative weight assigned to these criteria?

   c. Could you describe how this varies from college to college?

   d. From department to department?

   e. Does the way in which criteria are weighted create any problems for your institution?

6. a. Do you know of cases in which faculty members were promoted or granted tenure on the basis of high quality research, with less than adequate performance in teaching?

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COMMENTS

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July 23, 1993

Paul Marshall, Director
Legislative Office of Education Oversight
Rhodes Office Tower
27th Floor
Columbus, Ohio

Dear Paul:

Thank you for sharing your report on faculty reward systems. We are in general agreement with the basic points of your report, and our Securing the Future efforts are designed to achieve many of the recommendations of the report.

We are moving forward in the implementation of the Securing the Future recommendations with regard to faculty workload. These recommendations, and the supporting budgetary language, provide us with an important strategic plan for enhancing undergraduate instruction. We are looking forward to the results of these efforts and will be sharing them broadly with our colleagues in education and government.

And, as a significant point, despite the increased emphasis on enhancing research during the past few decades, Ohio continues to lag significantly behind the rest of the country in attracting federal research funds critical to strengthening the state's economic base through the development of new initiatives. We are strongly committed to ensuring that campuses achieve an appropriate balance between teaching and research such that these kinds of efforts may continue even as we strengthen undergraduate teaching. There are significant connections between teaching and research that need to be preserved.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to respond.

Sincerely,

Elaine

Elaine H. Hairston
Chancellor

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